I: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

certain dominant but non-priestly clans (*suntris*). In other States the Council has been widened by the addition to it of village headmen (*sirdars*), or the chief superintendents (*basans*) of the village markets, tolls from which constitute the chief item in the public receipts of these States. A further step towards the recognition of the public will in the nomination of a Siem has been the introduction of popular elections, at which all the adult males vote. Such popular elections were very greatly due to the views held by Colonel Bivar, who was Deputy-Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills from 1865 to 1877. These elections have been, in many States, an innovation which is hardly in accord with public sentiment, and in many cases the voters have done no more than confirm the selection of a special electoral body. It is, however, clear that the idea of popular elections is not one with which the people are unfamiliar, e.g. in Langrim State, where all the adult males customarily vote at an election of a Siem. Popular election has also been customary in the Nobosohpoh and Bhowal States, in cases where a special electoral body has been unable to agree upon a nomination, and also in Nongspung, if a Council of five *lyngdohs*, which has in this State authority to declare who is the rightful heir, but not to disqualify him, cannot come to an unanimous decision. The Siems are appointed by an assembly, or *durbar*, which will be described later. The chiefs, having been thus chosen by the *durbar*, which is supposed by the people to be an institution of Divine origin, are styled, *ki Siem u Blei*, or Siems of God. In most States the Siem is the religious as well as the secular head, e.g. in the Cherra State, where the Siem is also *lyngdoh*. In Khyrim State the Siem has sacerdotal duties to perform at different religious ceremonies, especially at the time of the annual Nongkrem dance. It is the custom for the Siem to consult the auspices with the soothsayers for the good of the State. The Siem in matters judicial acts as a judge, the whole body of the *durbar* being the jury. In olden days the Siem marched to war at the head of his army. It is not customary to recognise an heir-apparent, and the young men of the Siem family pursue the ordinary avocations of a Khasi, not comporting themselves in the least like scions of royalty. In quite

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Which elects the Siem -- Analysis

16: McCormack R-4,5 (1956-1959) 1956
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another. In other words, a state is not a fixed territorial entity. In the early twentieth century, the most populous of the 25 chiefdoms, Khyrim, contained 30,833 persons occupying 7,800 houses in 272 villages, and the least populous, Nongkhrai, contained 240 persons occupying 53 houses in 3 villages. Formerly each of the chiefdoms was headed by a *syiem* (chief), three by a *lyngdoh* (priest), six by a *siewlai*, and one by a *wahadadar*. These leaders all had executive and judicial functions, but a chief's authority was limited in that he had to obtain the approval of his executive council before acting. The other leaders were subject to a similar limitation. A chief maintained a small police force. His major sources of revenue were market tolls, fines, and, more recently, income from licenses to distill raw whisky. Succession to a ruling role in the larger states traditionally involved election by members of a lineage that had a hereditary right to elect, from among members of a lineage that had the hereditary right to rule. In British times, the elective basis was broadened, differentially in the various states, even to the point of popular elections. [Cf. Anthaires 1951, Lyngdoh 1961.] **Social stratification.** The three classes of lineage are the nobles, the commoners, and the slaves or servants. This stratification applies only to the recruitment to office in the native-state system, for there is no hereditary rank in a village assembly everyone has equal voice. The noble lineages have the hereditary right to fill from among their male members roles such as village or state priest, councilor to a chief, or electors of a chief. The few lineages which today are remembered as slave or servant lineages had the inherited obligation to render special services to a chief's household. There is no Khasi term for "commoner." Every lineage other than a noble or a slave lineage is a commoner lineage, and the commoner lineages are in the majority. **Warfare.** Warfare was suppressed by the British, and little is known for certain about its traditional forms. The tactics which confronted the British were the ambush and the guerrilla raid. Traditional goals included taking heads from other Khasis and capturing women from the valleys.

RELIGION. **Major and indigenous religions.** A Welsh Calvinistic Methodist missionary penetrated into Cherrapunji in 1832, and the work that he began continues to this day. His society, which has since become the Welsh Presbyterian Foreign Mission, introduced writing, village primary schools, a high school, a theological seminary, and a hospital. Competing missionaries followed, and by 1914 some Shillong Khasis were puzzling over the tenets not only of traditional Hinduism and Islam but also of the Buddhists, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Unitarians (Roy 1914). By the 1920s, missionaries of the Church of God and the Seventh Day Adventists were